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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1510
INFO RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1284
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0532
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY 0021
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 0585
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN PRIORITY 0180
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 0143
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY 0118
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY 0213
RUEAWJC/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

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DEPT FOR P, T, ISN/CPI, AF/S

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PARM](#) [MNUC](#) [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: AQ KHAN TRIAL: GERHARD WISSER PLEADS GUILTY!!

REF: PRETORIA 2675 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (SBU) German citizen and South African resident Gerhard Wisser pled guilty to unlawful manufacture of components of illicit gas centrifuge uranium enrichment plants intended for Libya and Pakistan and associated export control violations on 04 September in the Pretoria High Court. In his statement of facts regarding his crimes, Wisser acknowledged he engaged in these activities in cooperation with Pakistani scientist Dr. Abdul Quadeer Khan, Sri Lankan businessman Buhary Seyed Abu Tahir and German citizen Gotthard Lerch, former head of the vacuum division of Leybold Heraeus GmbH.

¶2. (SBU) High Court judge Joop Labuschagne, in accordance with the plea agreement reached between the state and the accused, sentenced Wisser to a total of 18 years' imprisonment and required him to forfeit the profits of his criminal activities (Rand 6 mil held domestically and an additional Euro 2.85 mil seized abroad). In exchange for his plea, and his commitment to cooperation with future domestic and international investigations/prosecutions, 15 years of Wisser's sentence will be suspended and he will spend the remaining three years in "custodial supervision" (i.e. under house arrest).

¶3. (SBU) Wisser's co-conspirator, Swiss citizen Daniel Geiges, continues to maintain his innocence. His trial was separated from that of Wisser and has been postponed until 21 September in light of Geiges' continued ill health. Charges against Wisser and Geiges' company, Krisch Engineering, have been dropped as redundant in the face of Wisser's guilty plea.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: Mission will forward the full text of the plea agreement, which includes affidavits from DoE Deputy Administrator William H. Tobey, Los Alamos National Laboratory expert Jeff Bedell and retired Oak Ridge National Laboratory fellow Ron Miskell, to AF/S and ISN/CPI via email. A more detailed account of the court proceedings and subsequent media reaction will be provided septel.

Teitelbaum